

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A method comprising:
receiving a call from a caller, the call being associated with a first merchant;
placing the call in a queue for the first merchant;
determining a second merchant; and
establishing a connection, the connection enabling the caller to make a purchase from the second merchant while the call remains in the queue for the first merchant.
2. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
receiving an incoming call from a caller;
placing the incoming call in a queue;
determining at least one merchant;
determining access information associated with the at least one merchant; and
establishing a connection, based on the access information, with the at least one merchant, the connection enabling the caller to make a purchase from the at least one merchant while the incoming call remains in the queue.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
transferring the incoming call to an attendant.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of entertainment options.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
receiving from the caller an indication of at least one entertainment option.
6. (Original) The method of claim 2, in which determining the at least one merchant comprises:
providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of merchants; and

receiving from the caller an indication of the at least one merchant.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
determining information that is associated with the incoming call.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
receiving the information that is associated with the incoming call from the caller.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a record of a database, in which the record is associated with the caller.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a record of a database, in which the record is associated with the incoming call.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:
providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of entertainment options based on the information that is associated with the incoming call.

12. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:
providing to the caller an indication of the at least one merchant based on the information that is associated with the incoming call.

13. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which determining the at least one merchant comprises:
determining the at least one merchant based on the information that is associated with the incoming call.

14. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which determining the at least one merchant comprises:

determining a plurality of merchants based on the information that is associated with the incoming call;

providing to the caller an indication of the plurality of merchants; and
receiving from the caller an indication of the at least one merchant.

15. (Original) The method of claim 7, in which the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises at least one of:

a time the incoming call was received,
a time the incoming call has been on hold,
an indication of a category of the incoming call,
a name of the caller,
an identifier that identifies the caller,
a telephone number associated with the caller,
an address associated with the caller,
data indicating at least one purchase associated with the caller,
data indicating at least one reservation associated with the caller,
an indication of an area of expertise of the caller,
an indication of a rate charged for expertise of the caller, and
an account identifier that identifies a financial account associated with the caller.

16. (Original) The method of claim 2, in which the access information comprises at least one of:

a uniform resource locator (URL),
a telephone number,
a discount identifier that identifies a discount,
a promotional code,
a digital certificate,
an account number, and

a password.

17. (Previously presented) A method comprising:
receiving an incoming call from a caller via a first connection;
placing the incoming call in a queue;
determining information that is associated with the incoming call;
providing to the caller a menu indicating at least one merchant;
receiving from the caller an indication of a merchant;
determining a telephone number associated with the merchant;
establishing a second connection between the caller and the merchant based on the telephone number, the second connection enabling the caller to make a purchase from the merchant while the incoming call remains in the queue; and
transferring the incoming call from the queue to an attendant.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
receiving the information that is associated with the incoming call from the caller via an interactive voice response unit (IVRU).

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a record of a database, in which the record is associated with the caller.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises:
retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a record of a database, in which the record is associated with the incoming call.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17, in which providing to the caller the menu comprises:

providing to the caller the menu based on the information that is associated with the incoming call.

22. (Original) The method of claim 17, in which the information that is associated with the incoming call comprises at least one of:

- a time the incoming call was received,
- a time the incoming call has been on hold,
- an indication of a category of the incoming call,
- an indication of a position of the incoming call within the queue,
- a name of the caller,
- an identifier that identifies the caller,
- a telephone number associated with the caller,
- an address associated with the caller,
- data indicating at least one purchase associated with the caller,
- data indicating at least one reservation associated with the caller,
- an indication of an area of expertise of the caller,
- an indication of a rate charged for expertise of the caller, and
- an account identifier that identifies a financial account associated with the caller.

23. (New) A method, comprising:

- receiving an incoming telephone call from a caller;
- determining, after the receiving, that an attendant is unavailable to answer the call;
- placing, after the determining of the lack of attendant availability, the call in a queue;
- offering, after the placing of the call in the queue, the caller a plurality of entertainment options;
- receiving, after the offering and from the caller, an indication of a selection of one of the plurality of entertainment options;

establishing, after the receiving of the indication of the selected entertainment option, a connection between the caller and the selected entertainment option while the call remains in the queue;

determining, after the establishing of the connection between the caller and the selected entertainment option, that the attendant is available to answer the call;

notifying, after the determination that the attendant is available, the caller that the attendant is available; and

allowing the caller, after notifying the caller, to choose between (i) maintaining the connection with the selected entertainment option and (ii) establishing a connection with the attendant.